

Gladys Gary Vaughn

USDA-Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights



Do's and Don'ts of Grant Writing

In competitive funding:

- *What you do—and do not do—matters.
- *All things, big and small, count.

Do's and Don'ts

 Before you begin to develop a proposal, remember that good writing, the logical organization of ideas, and good grammar are the foundation for success.

 There are REAL reasons proposals do not get funded. These reasons can be grouped into five categories.



Overall Quality

Approach

Budget and Cost Effectiveness

Personnel

Objectives are too ambitious in scope

Objectives do not match the objectives of the funding source

Overall Quality

Good idea/concept, but wrong priority for funding source

Problem/issue addressed not likely to be viewed as significant





Guidelines provided by funding source not followed

Proposal is not easy to read, not written in "plain English", and does not present a professional appearance

Overall Quality

Proposal lacks new or original ideas

Evidence that program will "live" beyond life of grant not presented or insufficient





Make a case for why the funding source should fund your proposal

Describe how the program will make a difference for the targeted audience or community

Overall Quality

Describe the potential this program has for serving the common good

Demonstrate that your organization has the capacity to handle the program

Problem or issue has not been clearly identified

A solution to the problem or issue has not been identified or proposed

Approach

Problem or issue has been clearly identified but not documented

Objectives are not clearly stated; not measurable, too broad, too many or too ambitious



Cause and effect are not clear; potential difficulties not identified or discussed

Benefits to applicant, audience, funding agency and society are not clearly made

Approach

Approach poorly conceptualized, poorly written, difficult to understand

Design not clearly described (e.g., methods, standard operating procedures, controls)



Identify potential collaborators and linkages

Present a reasonable timetable for the program, including milestones and dates—for the entire project, from beginning to end

Approach

Include a well designed evaluation plan, including potential outputs, outcomes and impact

Describe the proposed evaluation process, including metrics, potential products, outcomes, and impact

Funding restrictions not followed

Funding request is not within the range of funding available from the funding source

Budget and Cost Effectiveness

Budget inadequate to support the program's proposed scope of work (i.e., budget requests too little or too much)

Budget narrative not included; budget items not sufficiently justified



Relate the expenditure of resources for the program to the basic mission of the organization/institution

Respond to <u>every budget</u> guestion or element

Budget and Cost Effectiveness

Ensure the amount of effort reflected in the budget corresponds with the effort described in the approach

Justify all requests for equipment

Include resumes of all principal program personnel

Resumes of program personnel not likely to cause reviewers to raise competence issues

Personnel

Program Personnel have demonstrated a commitment to the targeted community and audience

Time commitment of principal personnel is adequate for proposed scope of work

Description of major functions and tasks to be performed by principal staff not clearly identified or not included

Little or no indication that the proposed personnel have the expertise required to perform the scope of work proposed

Personnel

Project director or other principal staff are to be paid to perform tasks that could be performed by volunteers, clerical or administrative assistants

Salary and benefits proposed are not in sync with salary and benefits of similar positions in area, region or state





Budget appears "padded" or inflated; indirect costs are incorrect or too high

Personnel and other administrative costs require too great a percentage of the total cost of the program

Budget and Cost Effectiveness

Separate budgets for each year of a multi-year program not included

Organization's resources earmarked for use by the program are not clearly identified, or a value not given

SUMMARY

- Make sure:
 - You are submitting your best effort
 - You are responding to the correct version of the request for proposal or application
 - You have read and followed all instructions
 - Your proposal includes new or original ideas; is innovative



SUMMARY

- Make sure:
 - There are no conflicts of interest in the proposal
 - You have not missed any deadlines
 - Your proposal creates excitement; is a joy to read



Contact Information

Gladys Gary Vaughn, Ph.D.

Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights &

Chief, Cultural Transformation Program

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

Suite 266, Room 279, Reporters Building

U.S. Department of Agriculture

300 Seventh Street, S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20024

Phone: 202-205-5116

Email: Gladys.Vaughn@usda.gov